

**Rat control  
often takes an ongoing,  
community effort.**

**Let's work together  
to get rid of rats.**

**For more information  
on rat control and sanitation  
call your  
local health department**



DOH Pub 334-019 4/2007 English

Zoonotic Disease Program  
Office of Environmental Health & Safety  
PO Box 47825  
Olympia, WA 98504-7825

1-888-586-9427

For persons with disabilities, this document is available  
on request in other formats. To submit a request please  
call 1-888-586-9427 (TTY/TDD 1-800-833-6388).

# RATS

## Let's Get Rid of Them

**Rats thrive on the stuff that people throw away. Rats are attracted  
to open garbage cans, table scraps, trash piles and pet food.  
They also like woodpiles, old furniture, abandoned cars  
and fence rows overgrown with weeds. If you give them an opening,  
they will come into your house.**

## Where Do Rats Get Into Your House?

- Any small opening—even as small as the size of a dime
- Cracks and breaks in the foundation
- Burrowing under the foundation
- Spaces around pipes that go into your house from outside
- Holes in the floor around pipes and vents or inside walls
- Small gaps under doors
- Openings in the roof or eaves

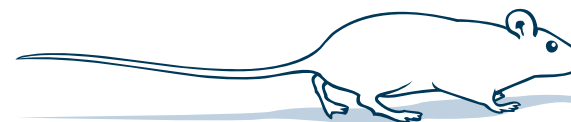
## Rats can be dangerous

Rats and their fleas can carry deadly diseases. They can destroy things in your home, and have even started fires by gnawing through electrical wires.

## There are two main kinds of rats

### The Roof Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

The roof rat lives in walls, attics and loose material such as empty boxes or rubbish piles. It can jump as high as 30 inches and is a good climber. It likes to eat grain and fresh food.



### The Sewer Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

The sewer rat, also known as the Norway rat, likes to burrow. It lives and breeds in sewers, basements and excavations. A sewer rat can dig through very hard soil and can even gnaw holes in concrete and wood beams. It can live in or near the water and is a good swimmer.



# Keep Rats and Other Rodents Out of Your House

## Starve them out

Keep garbage in tightly covered cans. Replace outdoor garbage cans that have holes, rusted bottoms or lids that don't fit.

Store pet food, bird seed, and animal feed indoors in containers with tight fitting covers. Don't leave open pet food dishes outside.

Rats like to eat:

- Garbage
- Pet food, bird and animal feed
- Fallen fruit and nuts
- Vegetable compost
- Animal waste

## Remove their shelter

Keep the area around your house clear of junk piles and debris. Keep grass and plants trimmed. Don't pile or stack wood or other materials against walls. Keep areas under porches and steps clear.

In the basement raise storage boxes and other materials 18 inches off the floor.

Keep the areas under sinks and behind appliances and cabinets clean and uncluttered.

Wear gloves and a dust mask to clean up nesting areas. Thoroughly spray and wipe down surfaces with a disinfectant. Seal wastes in double plastic bags and place in your outdoor garbage.

## Build them out

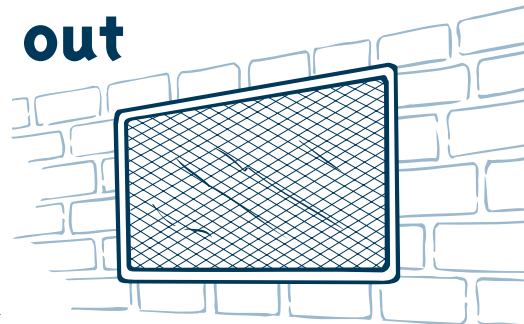
Use 1/4 inch heavy wire mesh or screen to cover vents in the foundation. Plug up, screen or cover all openings bigger than 1/4 inch. Use sheet metal and steel wool to cover and plug holes.

Make collars out of sheet metal to fit around pipes.

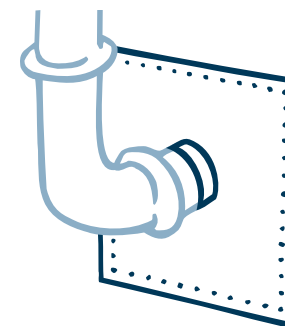
Keep doors to the outside closed. Use springs to make sure they always close. Repair gaps bigger than 1/4 inch around outside doors.

Cover the edges of doors with sheet metal to stop rats from gnawing holes.

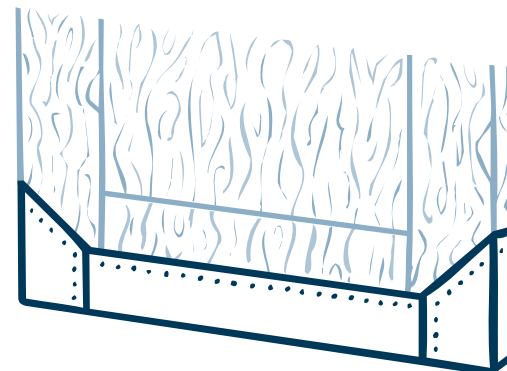
Keep floor drains tightly fastened.



*Cover openings with screens*



*Make pipe collars out of sheet metal*



*Cover door edges with sheet metal*

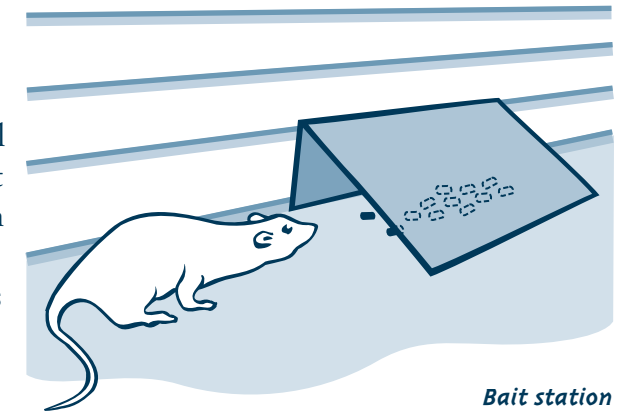
## Get rid of them

### Rat Traps

Snap traps are the cheapest and most effective way to catch rats. Use plenty of traps so you catch the rats before they recognize and avoid the traps. Place traps along baseboards, in corners, behind appliances and other places rats travel or hide. Peanut butter is a good bait. Or you can use whatever food the rats have been after.

### Poisons

Follow the directions on the label exactly! Rat poisons can work well, but the rats may die in places you can't reach.



*Bait station*

Bait stations protect the poison bait from weather and help keep out pets. Also, rats like to eat in secure places, so bait stations are more effective. Place and secure bait stations near woodpiles, garbage cans, fence rows and haystacks.

Traps and poisons can be purchased in most supermarkets and hardware stores.

### Exterminators

Hiring a professional exterminator is another way to get rid of rodents. Choose a reputable company and make sure you understand about costs and methods.



**Dear Colleague,**

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is pleased to provide camera-ready art for printing this educational material. To ensure that the original quality of the piece is maintained, please read and follow the instructions below and the specifications included for professional printing.

- **Use the latest version.** DOH materials are developed using the most current information available, are checked for clinical accuracy, and are field tested with the intended audience to ensure they are clear and readable. DOH programs make periodic revisions to educational materials, so please check this web site to be sure you have the latest version. DOH assumes no responsibility for the use of this material or for any errors or omissions.
- **Do not alter.** We are providing this artwork with the understanding that it will be printed without alterations and copies will be free to the public. Do not edit the text or use illustrations or photographs for other purposes without first contacting us. Please do not alter or remove the DOH logo, publication number or revision date. If you want to use a part of this publication for other purposes, contact the Office of Health Promotion first.
- **For quality reproduction:** Low resolution PDF files are intended for black and white or color desktop printers. They work best if you are making only one or two copies. High resolution PDF files are intended for reproducing large quantities and are set up for use by professional offset print shops. The high resolution files also include detailed printing specifications. Please match them as closely as possible and insist on the best possible quality for all reproductions.

If you have questions, contact:

Office of Health Promotion

P.O. Box 47833 Olympia, WA 98504-7833

(360) 236-3736

**Sincerely,**

**Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team**

# P R I N T I N G   S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

**Title:**    **Rats: Let's Get Rid of Them**

**Size:**    14 x 8.5

**Paper stock:**    70# text Royal Fiber white

**Ink color:**    PMS 547

**Special instructions:**    Prints 2 sides. Finished job folds to 3.5 x 8.5

**DOH Pub #:**    334-019